

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR THREADING HETEROGENOUS COMMUNICATIONS IN COLLABORATIVE PROCESS CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

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A system and method for threading heterogeneous communications in collaborative contexts organizes diverse communication items in their own diverse formats into communication threads resembling those of discussion groups. The invention allows participants to create and/or post items (*e.g.* chat rooms or documents) and respond to posts with related items (*e.g.* relevant files or comments). Additionally, a method and system for associating these communications threads with individual steps in a business or design/development process is provided. A common user interface allows use of a variety of communication mechanisms such as chat rooms, electronic whiteboards, notes and documents. A threading server maintains a complete list of items in all threads, along with the process steps that refer to each communication item. For each communication item, the server also maintains an index explicitly identifying each item in its native system, so that access to disparate systems is enabled without replicating functionality or data.

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